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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 28, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 28, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Mersin's 2nd Court of First Instance continued hearing the case of six children, who allegedly attempted to burn the Turkish flag in Mersin on March 20 (see press summaries 03/21, 23 and 24). The children did not appear at the court session. Because of the Christmas holiday the observers from the European Council did not attend the hearing as well. Attorney of the defendants said that the court has focused attention on claims of an unidentified person dressed in a suit who allegedly incited the children to wrongful action. The hearing is adjourned until March 13, 2006.

OZGUR GUNDEM / ZAMAN: Recent secret visit of National Jandarma Command's Intelligence Service Chairperson and Brigadier Commander Mehmet Corten to Musa Sivacioglu, Chairperson of the Turkish Parliament's commission for probing the Semdinli Case (TPCSC), to submit a report on the incident, caused a crisis. Reportedly, the report said that the two non-commissioned officers "acted unprofessionally." Ahmet Ersin, member of the commission from CHP (Republican People's Party), angered by the alleged secret visit, said this development cast a shadow on the credibility of the commission and he would demand to call back Corten and have him explain what he meant by "acting unprofessionally."

ZAMAN: TPCSC will hear the statements of former Hakkari Governor Erdogan Gurbuz, National Security Directorate's Anti-Terror Section Chairperson Selim Akyildiz and Semdinli Subgovernor Mustafa Cihat Feslihan today.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The reports generated by MIT (National Intelligence Center) Office of the Prime Minister, and Jandarma Command have been submitted to the TPCSC. Jandarma's report said that two non-commissioned officers' duty on the day of the Semdinli incident were to track down a packet that would allegedly be sent from Germany. When the bombing took place, the "team" was there to have a comfort break. The officers went to the site when the bombing took place and the local people thought that they carried out the bombing.

ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM / CUMHURIYET: Reportedly, following the December 19 newspaper report on corruption activities carried out at the Habur Border Gate, police initiated an anti-corruption operation at Habur Border Gate in Sirnak's Silopi district and detained two non-commissioned officers, five police officers and a village muhtar (headmen).

OZGUR GUNDEM: People in the Karaduvar quarter of Mersin's Akdeniz township are reportedly intimidated by the security guards of a company called TUTAS Petroleum, which lost a lawsuit filed by the local people on charges of illegally installing pipelines and contaminating the soil where agricultural cultivation was taking place. Despite the court's verdict, guards of the company reportedly attacked the persons that came to uninstall the pipes. The local people are worried about violence they have been subjected to and are reportedly afraid to send their children to school.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily reported the displeasure of Kurds with a Turkish airline company called Onur Air which made no mention of Kurdish people in a four-page December 21 dated article in its free promotional magazine, which enumerated the names of Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Azeri people as the inhabitants of the Sanliurfa province, but made no mention of the Kurdish people who reportedly make up the majority of the population in Sanliurfa.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Syriac Orthodox Christians in Mardin's Midyat district celebrated Christmas with a church ritual that started at 5.30 a.m. at Mort Smuni Church in Midyat. The ritual was conducted by the Mor Gabriel Monastery Metropolitan Samuel Aktas.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: During a meeting of Tunceli Mayor Songul Erol Abdil with the city assembly and the people of Tunceli, the municipality reported on the services it provided in 2005 and expressed its commitment to undertake efforts to provide a wider variety of services for people of Tunceli in

12006.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Four of the five people detained on charges of alleged plans to assassinate Van Governor Niyazi Tanilir were arrested following their detention and arraignment (see press summary 12/27). The fifth person was released because of minor age.

YENI SAFAK / CUMHURIYET / HURRIYET / RADIKAL / ZAMAN: Zahide Koc, a woman who was locked in a stable by her father for six years reportedly for separating from her husband in Hakkari's Yuksekova district, was rescued through the two-month long efforts of women's rights activists.

HURRIYET: After noticing a hand grenade in one of the irrigation canals of the DSI (State Water Works) canal network in Adana, local residents called the police. Bomb squad members safely took the Turkish made bomb to the Security Directorate for further analysis.

ZAMAN: RTUK (Supreme Board of Radio and Television), which have not taken any steps to date about the applications of the stations to broadcast in non-Turkish language and dialects on grounds that the stations' application documents were not complete, held a meeting and announced that it decided to grant authorization to local radio and television stations to broadcast in non-Turkish languages and dialects. RTUK will reportedly require the stations to submit an attested warrant that they will neither promote separatism nor provide language education.

CUMHURIYET: Turkish Parliament's Commission for Probing Honor Killings (TPCHK), which is currently conducting studies at the local level in Diyarbakir and Sanliurfa, have highlighted the extent of the ongoing family feuds in the region. According to the statements of the chairperson of the Chamber of Butchers, who voluntarily tracks incidents of honor killings and feuds in the region, in recent years 88 women fell victim to honor killings and there are currently 90 feuds going on in the region.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily reported criticisms that non-governmental organizations in Sanliurfa made against the TPCHK. Reportedly, TPCHK met only with state officials and chieftains of the clans in the region, which, according to the non-governmental organizations, further strengthened the feudal structures in the region.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): ISDEMIR (Iskenderun Iron and Steel Factory) in Hatay, which has been going through modernization for a period of time, aims to break a record in 2005 with a production figure of 2,014,780 tons of iron slabs.

12. ZAMAN / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Amin Rianom, Indonesia's Ambassador to Ankara, who was invited to Adana by ADISIAD (Adana Industrialists and Businessmen Association), paid separate visits to the Adana Governor Cahit Kirac and Mayor Aytac Durak. Rianom called on industrialists in Adana to make investments in Indonesia.

13. YENI SAFAK / OZGUR GUNDEM: The dailies pointed out that some provinces in southeastern Turkey have still not been included on the incentive list of the government, whereas provinces in western Turkey enjoyed benefits from the government incentives.

14. OZGUR GUNDEM: DISIAD (Diyarbakir's Businessmen and Industrialists Association) announced the new members of its executive board elected as a result of an extraordinary congress. Rafi Turk was named as the new chairperson replacing Seyhmus Akbas, the former chairperson of DISIAD.

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